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Space Culture – Public Engagement in Space through Culture (9)

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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN SPACE WITH THE MOON VILLAGE ASSOCIATION: A CRITICAL  
REVIEW OF EFFORTS GLOBALLY AND IN THE UK**Abstract**

One of the greatest challenges in exploring the universe is to become more collaborative as a species. The long-term exploration of space is too expensive and risky for a single country or space agency to successfully pursue alone. Hence, to achieve the ambitious goals of space exploration, we must learn to collaborate en masse. The Moon Village Association (MVA) was established to create the Moon Village, a long-term human presence on the Moon and in cis-Lunar space. The MVA acts to create this non-traditional space programme, engaging people from all disciplines and from all over the world. The MVA encourages people to move towards a new space culture, in which space activities are more collaborative. This paper provides a critical review of the efforts of the MVA to engage the public in space. An introduction to the MVA's global activities is made and then focus is given to activities in the UK.

Professor Jim Dator hypothesised that all rationales for space are cultural rationales. This paper's author advocates this hypothesis and believes that the MVA must engage with the public at a cultural level. A structured approach to this is essential. This paper describes this approach and the four areas of focus in the UK: strategy, collaborations, membership, and promotion. An optimal strategy is vitally important. Firstly, the development of this strategy, which aims to build the MVA's presence through engagement with the public, is explained. The collaboration with the Moon Festival 2019, a celebration of the Moon on the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing, is described. Furthermore, the efforts to build connections with established space organisations are detailed. Building membership is a key element of the strategy, which has a cascading effect. The approach to attracting new members is explained. Finally, this paper notes the forms of promotion which were used to share information on the MVA and its activities.

The results of the above efforts are critically reviewed and suggestions for improvements are given. Furthermore, the author hopes that the strategy in this paper will provide a template for similar efforts worldwide. In summary, the MVA has already developed an international and interdisciplinary membership base. Activities in the UK have helped to further build membership and to engage the public in space. Step by step the MVA is working towards a globally collaborative Moon Village.